



The Vanity of Man and this World.

13d.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

ALNWICK,

On Occasion of the

DEATH

Of the late Reverend and Learned

JONATHAN HARLE, M.D.

By JOHN HORSLEY, M.A.

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A

SEYMOUR

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HAND

ON THE HABITS OF THE

D. M. and H. M. [John and Henry Montagu]

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P S A L M CXLIV. 4.

*Man is like to Vanity, his Days are as
a Shadow that passeth away.*

MAN that is born of a Woman is of few Job xiv.1.
Days, and full of Trouble. His short
Life is even crowded with Afflictions
of various Sorts. Sometimes we suf-
fer in our own Persons ; sometimes we are af-
flicted for others (the frequent Occasion we have
for bitter Condolence with our Friends, being no
small Part of the Trouble that attends the pre-
sent Life) And we have scarce sooner done
with one Affliction in our own Persons, or for
our Friends, than another of the same, or a
much worse Nature, does immediately follow.
Thus Deep calleth unto Deep, and the Clouds re- Psal. xliii. 7.
turn after the Rain. Eccles. xii.

The present World is justly compared to a ^{2.}
Wilderness, and to a Wilderness that's full of
Briars and Thorns : Or it is a Vale of Darkness,
Sorrow and Tears. When we seem to be most
prosperous and secure, we are even then too
truly in the Valley of the Shadow of Death ; and in Psal. xxiii.
the Midst of Life we are in Death. 4.

So certain is Death, so uncertain the Time
and Circumstances, that methinks none can be
free from the Terrors of it, but those who hope
to triumph over it, and know that if their earthly

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^{2 Cor. v.} House of this Tabernacle were dissolv'd, they have
^{3, 5.} a Building of God, an House not made with Hands,
 eternal in the Heavens, and that God has wrought
 them for the self same Thing. The Views and
 Hopes of a glorious Immortality, and of an
^{Heb. iv. 9.} eternal Rest which remains for all the People of God,
 make Life easy, and Death welcome. They
 who have any comfortable Assurance of their
 Interest in this heavenly Glory, and of their en-
 tring into this Rest, and have often delighted
 themselves with this agreeable Prospect: They,
 I say, can leave this World with Freedom and
 Pleasure; and as they shall have a glorious Tri-
 umph over Death and the Grave at the great
 Resurrection, so they seem by a kind of Antici-
 pation to triumph over it even when they are
 to encounter it, saying, and rejoicing when they
^{1 Cor. xv.} say it, O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave,
^{55.} where is thy Victory!

How remarkable an Instance of this was that
 truly reverend and worthy Person, whose most
 affecting Death is the mournful Occasion of the
 present Discourse! He is now gone to take Pos-
 session of the blessed Inheritance of the Saints in
 Light, which he liv'd and dy'd in the well-
 grounded Hopes of, and for which God had
 made him so meet, and so ripe. To allude to
^{John v. 35.} He was a burning and a shining
 Light, and ye were willing for a Season to rejoice in
 his Light: but now that Season is over. Not
 but that ye were still desirous and willing to re-
 joice in his Light; but God has not seen fit to
 continue it longer to you. And is it not too
 much to be fear'd, that you enjoy it no longer,
 because you improv'd it no better? Because you
 did not walk according to the Light; therefore
 you are now in Darkness, and your House is left
 unto

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unto you desolate. And the Removal of this great and good Man is one awful Instance more to shew, that *Man is like to Vanity, and that his Days are as a Shadow that passeth away.*

Man is like to Vanity. We are not to suppose that this Expression denotes only a Similitude or Resemblance; it rather signifies a certain Fact or real Identity, *viz.* that *Man is vain, or Vanity it self.* It were easy to produce several parallel Instances, where the same kind of Expression is used in the same manner; but I forbear it. The plain Truth therefore contained in the Words is this, *viz.* *Man is Vanity, and his Life a mere Shadow.* I shall here consider the Vanity of *Man*, and the Brevity of *Life*, and then apply the whole in some Inferences and Uses adapted particularly to the present Occasion.

Man is Vanity, that is, very vain. *Vain Man!* Job xi. 11, as he is call'd in the Scripture. He has a vain¹². Mind, and a perishing Body. Sin and the Fall have made us vain indeed. *Lord! what is Man!* Psal. cxliv. *that thou takest Knowledge of him? or the Son of man, that thou makest Account of him?* That is, just preceding the verse how vain a Creature is *Man*, and how unworthy ^{the} *Text.* of thy Regard?

Man's Life, and all the Transactions, and Enjoyments of it, are Vanity.

I. *His Life* is Vanity, and a mere Shadow. Job viii. 9. *Our Days upon Earth are a Shadow.* A Shadow is only an Appearance without any real Substance: Such is the Life of *Man*, a mere Shew, a vain and empty Appearance. The Scriptures compare it to every Thing almost that is transient and vanishing, to a *Vapour*, to the *Wind*, &c. and here you see, to a *Shadow.*

Death is most certain and near; how confident soever some may be of long Life, and at how

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how great a Distance soever they may place this evil Day in their own Imagination and Fancy. Life is as uncertain as an infinite Number of Accidents, at whose Mercy it lies, can make it: And Death is as sure as the express Testimony of Scripture, the Nature of the Thing, and constant Observation or Experience can possibly render it. *It is appointed for all Men once to die,* are the Words, and contain the Decree of him, *whose Counsel shall stand.* Death has passed upon all that have gone before us, and must pass upon our selves, and shall pass upon all that are to come after us: For where is the Man that shall not see Death? We are wonderfully made; but yet our Make, though fine and curious, is very brittle; and the Seeds of Mortality are sown in the Bodies of all. So tender are the Vessels in human Bodies, that, as it were, contain and convey Life, and so great is the Number and Variety of them; so soon and so easily are even the vital Parts destroy'd or disordered; that I often think it a Wonder of Providence, that we are even preserved the short while we do live. And do we not daily see with our Eyes all sorts of Persons dying round about us, *the wise as well as the foolish;* and that the Prophets themselves don't live for ever? When the Sun is shining in its Meridian Brightness, who doubts but it will speedily set, being taught by daily Observation to draw this Conclusion? No more can any thinking Person question, but that the Life of Man, even in its best Estate, is altogether Vanity; and that he who is now most strong and flourishing, will soon be humbled in the very Dust. Man's Life is but a Day: He grows at Morning, flourishes a while at Noon, and is cut down and withers in the Evening. And, if I may pursue the Similitude,

Heb. ix.

27.

Rom. v.

12.

Psalm

lxxxix.

48.

Zech. i. 5.

Psal. xc. 6.

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it is a Winter-day, rather than a Summer one, cloudy and short, rather than long and pleasant. The King of Terrors is an Enemy whom all must sooner or later encounter, and none can be exempted or releas'd from this Warfare.

II. *All the Transactions of Life are Vanity.* Man's Designs, Projects, Endeavours, &c. how vain are they! how often, and how easily are they baffled, and so prove abortive? How common is it for Men to be balk'd in their best contriv'd, and most hopeful Designs, by the Intervention of somewhat which they did not, and could not, foresee? How fruitless are their Desires, and how oft are their Hopes disappointed! How often does it happen, that, when Men think they have nothing to do, but just to take and enjoy, somewhat suddenly and unexpectedly intervenes and baulks them? If nothing else does it, Death comes, and puts an End to all; in that very Moment *bis Thoughtis perish.* Whilst he is foolishly forming Projects for a long Time to Luke xii. come, and laying up much Goods for many^{19, 20.} Years, how oft in that very Night is his Soul required of him? *It is vain to rise up early, and to sit Psalm cxxvii. 1, 2. late, to eat the Bread of Sorrow.* They are *quieted in vain, and heap up Riches in vain.* Psalm xxxix. 6. They labour in vain that labour only for this World. The only Labour in this World that Cor. xv. is not in vain, is that which is in the Lord, and^{18.} that whereby we are prepared for a better World.

III. *All the Enjoyments of Life are Vanity.* They are uncertain and perishing, and unsatisfactory, even while we enjoy them. *Riches make them Prov. 12. 5. selves Wings and fly away.* Honour is but an xxiii. 5. empty Breath quickly puff'd away, and depends upon the Humour and Opinion of the People,

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People, which are as uncertain and variable as the Wind it self. The other Pleasures of Life perish in the very using of them. All is inconstant and fleeting; and where is the Enjoyment that deserves the Name of abiding?

^{1 Cor. vii. 31.} *The Fashion of this World,* and all the Beauty and Glory of it, passeth away very quickly. This, as well as the Life of Man, may be compar'd to the Flower of the Field: *The Flower thereof fadeth, and the Grace of the Fashion of it perisheth;* so also shall the rich Man fade away in his Ways, Jam. i. 11. And if we could even be sure of these Enjoyments as long as we live, yet still their Uncertainty would be parallel to that of our Lives. If they should not be remov'd from us, yet we shall soon know Body knows how soon, be remov'd from them.

But their Uncertainty might be better dispens'd with, if they afforded any true Satisfaction, even while we enjoy them. But when we come to make Trial of them, they are far from yielding what they seem'd to promise, and what we were inclin'd to expect, being great only in Imagination, and when at a Distance.

^{Prov. iii. 17.} *Wisdom's Ways are indeed Ways of Pleasantness;* and all her Paths are Peace; and in this respect Mat. ix. She is justified of her Children. Here one may say with Safety, *O taste and see,* and you'll find Psalm xxxiv. 8. *it to be good;* make Trial of it, and you can't but love it. The more you try, the better you'll like. The faster and farther you walk in Religious Ways, the more pleasant you'll still find them to be. But with respect to all earthly Enjoyments and Pleasures, it is just the Reverse. These always fail upon Trial; and instead of Satisfaction, yield nothing but Vexation and Vanity. How often do those very Things, which we expected

pected most Pleasure and Satisfaction from, prove upon Trial a very great Affliction and Exercise to us? How often (to pass by other Instances) is this the Case with respect to Friends, Relations and Children? These, no doubt, are the greatest of earthly Comforts, when God is pleas'd to make them so. But how often do they by their Miscarriages, or by their Death, or their own Troubles, prove the greatest and heaviest of Afflictions to us? And if we have any little Comfort in any Enjoyment, yet how is this more than over-balanc'd, if not totally destroy'd, by some other Sorrow or Trouble, arising either from the Presence of some Evil, or the Absence of some real or imaginary Good! How much more Concern and Uneasiness is created to most Men, by the want of something which they desire, than they have Satisfaction or Pleasure in all they enjoy?

Curtæ nescio quid semper abest rei.

Men generally think themselves cut short of somewhat, they know not what, this *nescio quid*, which they think they really want, and earnestly desire; and the Discontent and Uneasiness proceeding from hence quite spoils their Satisfaction in all that they enjoy beside. And this Desire, Discontent and Uneasiness, usually increases in Proportion to the Height of that State and Condition to which Men arrive in this World: so that no Rank or Degree of Men are exempted from it, even from the Prince that sits upon the Throne, to the Beggar on the Dung-hill; only it seems rather most to haunt and disturb the highest and greatest: nor is it possible, without the Grace and particular Blessing of God,

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God, to escape this Disturbance. It was a vain Boast of the Heathen Poet, when he said,

Det vitam det opes, æquum mi animum ipse parabo.

" Let Jupiter give Life and Wealth, I'll procure
" my self an even contented Mind." But a wiser

Eccles. v. 19. and greater than he has told us that this also is the Gift of God, and a Gift bestow'd on few. And

as for intellectual Pleasure, or that which arises from Reading and Knowledge; this indeed is vastly preferable to sensual brutish Pleasures: but how few apply themselves this way? And how much Vanity attends this also, both upon the Account of the Darkness, and of the Uncertainty and small Compass of our Knowledge here

Job viii. 9. (For we are but of Yesterday, and know nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. and we now see through a Glass, and but darkly) and

12. also upon account of the little Satisfaction that it affords? And Solomon tells us, that he who

Eccles. i. 18. increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow, so that this also is Vanity. How far then must all the empty Pleasures of the present Life be from balancing the great and real Sorrows of it? And how just is Solomon's Remark in the Book of Ecclesiastes to this Purpose? It were easy to enlarge on this Subject. I shall only beg Leave briefly to observe these two or three Things.

1. Much of our Pleasure is only a kind of negative Pleasure, consisting only in a Freedom from Trouble. For what else is Ease after a racking violent Pain, and yet what is there that affords a greater Transport of Pleasure than this? What else is Rest after Labour and Fatigue? And what else is Sleep, which is pris'd and desir'd so much, and which is spoken of in Scripture as a special Favour and Mercy, the Gift

Gift of God bestow'd upon his Beloved? *For so Psalm
be giveth his Beloved Sleep.* Now what is Sleep,^{cxxvii. 2.}
but a Negation, a Removal for a while of all
the Uneasiness and Trouble that attends human
Life? 'Tis a temporary Death, and therefore
spoken of by the Antients as very near a-kin to
Death it self. And if this be the Case, how
strong an Argument is this, that the Sorrow
and Uneasiness that attends this Life, is much
more than a Balance for all the Pleasures of it*;
since a pure Negation of both is look'd on as a
State that is desirable? And why then should
not the Grave it self be look'd on as the best
Bed? for there the *Wicked cease from troubling, and Job iii. 17;*
there the Weary be at rest.

2. The Pleasure and Happiness of this World
is in a great Measure purely imaginary, and so
one would think not much better than one in
Bedlam enjoys, who fancies himself to be this or
the other great or happy Person. For what is
Honour, that most are so fond of, but Imagi-
nation and Fancy? And the same is true of sev-
eral other Things, the Pleasure whereof is purely
Phantastic; like his whose Frenzy is so well de-
scrib'd by the Heathen Poet, and who gave but
little Thanks to his Friends for curing him of it†.

* —— Teq; ipsum vitas fugitivus & erro,
Jam vino quærens, jam somno fallere curam
Frustra: nam comes atra premit sequiturq; fugacem.

Hr. Lib. 2. Sat. 7. v. 112, &c.

Some, when pursu'd with vexation and Cares, make intox-
icating Liquors their Refuge, as the Poet here does plainly insi-
nuate, and as we our selves may have often observ'd.

† —— Pol me occidistis amici,
Non servatis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error.

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3. Where there is any thing of what may be called real positive Pleasure ; how oft or usually is it balanc'd by some preceding Uneasiness, or else by some subsequent Sorrow or Pain ? And this is more especially true of sinful immoderate Pleasures, when neither the Appetite nor Gratification are kept within Bounds. *What Fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?* And as to the Gratification of our sensual Appetites ; the Uneasiness, that arises from the Desire or Appetite before, is perhaps a Balance for the Pleasure that attends the Gratification of it. But then on the other hand, how much positive Pain and Trouble attends us in this Life and World, and that of several sorts, Pain of Body, Sorrow and Vexation of Mind, &c. *For Eccles. i. all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

2, 14, 17. But not to insist farther on this. Let us next consider briefly the Extent and Degree of this Vanity. And of this I may justly say that the Extent is universal, and the Degree superlative.

The Extent is universal ; and that, if I may be allow'd to express it so, both as to the Object and Subject. Every Thing is Vanity, and every Man is Vanity. All the Creatures of this lower World, Men and Things, are made subject to Vanity, to al-lude at least to Rom. viii. 20. Men of all Ranks and States, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Wise and Fools, Good and Bad, all are subject to Vanity. And as for the Degree of Vanity, it is the very highest and truly superlative ; and is so describ'd and represented in Scripture. There are two Places of Scripture which confirm not only what I am now saying, but all I have said : And these I have designedly reserv'd till now, and shall conclude the doctrinal Part with some Enlargement upon them. *Eccles. i. 2, 14. Vanity of Vanities,*

Vanities, all his Vanity. All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. How full and strong are these Words ! Not only *vain*, but *Vanity* it self in the Abstract ; not only *Vanity* it self in the Abstract, but *Vanity of Vanities*, which is known to express the superlative Degree in the Hebrew. And still to add the more Force and Emphasis to it, the same Expression is doubled, *Vanity of Vanities*, *Vanity of Vanities*, and yet again, all is *Vanity*. Solomon, with all his Wisdom and Eloquence, seems almost to want Words sufficient to express the Vanity of this World. *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, or *feeding upon the Wind*, as others render it, and not improbably or disagreeably to the Original. I'll but direct you to another Text more, *Psal. xxxix. 5, 6. Verily every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity ; surely every Man walketh in a vain shew*. David sets forth the Vanity of this Life and World in Expressions as full and strong as Solomon's were ; verily it is so, and surely it is so. Not only a few particular Persons, whose Circumstances may be uneasy, but every *Man*, and every *Man at his best Estate*, is *Vanity*, nay, is *altogether Vanity*. How moving, and yet how just and true a Description is this ? How agreeable to our own Observation and certain Experience, though that be not so extensive as Solomon's ? None indeed try'd farther, or had better Opportunities of making Trial than he. But as far as we have try'd, must we not all of us join with him in the Conclusion, that *all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* ; or say as in the Text, *Man is like to Vanity : his Days are as a Shadow that passeth away*.

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Infer. i. How great must the Misery of those be, whose Hopes and Happiness are confin'd to this

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this World ; and how amazing the Folly of those who choose to have it so ! Can Vexation and Vanity render a Man happy, or is this a desirable Portion ? Can he be well satisfy'd, who only feeds upon Husks, nay, who rather feeds on the Wind ? Are these Enjoyments here below either adapted to the spiritual Nature, or adequate to the Desires, of an immortal Soul ? And can he be easy or happy, whose Soul, his better Part, is unsatisfied, and must be so for ever ? The Soul of Man is of a noble Extract, of a superior Nature to the Things of this World, and aspires after a higher Satisfaction than these perishing Vanities can afford : And, in a word, nothing but the infinite and eternal God himself can satisfy the endless and boundless Desires of the immortal Soul. Corporeal, perishing Enjoyments by no means suit the Nature of a spi-

¹ Cor. xv. ritual immortal Being. ¹⁰ If in this Life we have only

^{19.} we have Hopes, if our Portion is in this World, and

Psal. xvii. all our good Things here : Oh ! how miserable must

^{14.} we be ! Dismal must the View be indeed, when

Luke xvi. there is no future Prospect of better Things

25. Let us earnestly pray not only to be deliver'd

Psal. xvii. out of the Hands of the Men of this World, wicked

^{34.} and unreasonable Men ; but also to be deliver'd

¹ Thess. out of their Number, and from their wretched

iii. 2. State and Condition.

Infer. 2. How thankful should they be who

have sure Hopes of better Things ? If God has rat-

wrought this Salvation for you, so that your

good Things, your best Things are yet in Re-

serve ; be thankful to him for this distinguishing

Psal. ciii. Favour. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all a

^{1.} that is within me be stirred up to bless his holy Name Des-

Job xviii. Death may well be the King of Terrors to them

^{14.} that have their Portion and good Things here

for it robs them of their *All*, and consigns them over to eternal Misery. But if you, by the Grace of God, have chosen the good Part which shall never be taken from you; rejoice in the Lord, and be exceedingly thankful. Here all Things fall ^{Luke xii. 1} alike to all; but in the other World there is a vast ^{Eccles. viii. 20. xix. 42} Difference indeed between the State of the Godly and of the Wicked. Bless God who has now distinguished you by his Grace, and e'er long will do it by Glory.

Infer. 3. How humbling a Consideration is this, and especially how should this cast down all sofy Thoughts that are rais'd upon the Vanities of this World? God can many ways easily ^{Isa. xxiii. 9.} stain the Pride of all our Glory; a scriptural Expression oft in the Mouth of your late worthy Pastor. The King of Terrors however soon disarms the World of all its Force and Charms. If you do but view Death closely, all the Beauty and Glory of this World will soon disappear, a dark and melancholy Veil will quickly overspread the whole of it. And who then would be proud of, or set their Hearts upon that which is not? There's ^{Prov. xxiii. 5.} nothing indeed that will more effectually discredit the World with us, and I may also add ourselves with our selves, than serious Thoughts of human Frailty will do. This makes those Things which we are apt to be proud of, appear in their true Colours, that is, exceedingly vain, so as to dispose us to a Contempt of 'em, rather than to be puff'd up with them.

Infer. 4. How reasonable is it that we should contract our Designs and Cares with respect to this World, as well as our Desires and Hopes of a long Continuance in it? Large Cares, vast Designs, and long Projects, suit not a short Life and

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and a vain World *. Hereby such Persons as give up themselves to such Courses, only pierce their Hearts through with many Sorrows, and all to no purpose. *They are disquieted in vain.* For if they should even succeed and heap up Riches, they know not who shall gather them, whether a wise Man or a Fool. Our Passage through the World is but short; too much Provision for it will rather hinder and clog us: And to leave it behind us to others, *this also is Vanity.* We should even contract our Hopes and Desires of Life it self. The Vanity of such Hopes and Desires is too manifest almost in every Case and every Person: But in some Cases that are not unfrequent, it is perfectly amazing. How peculiarly vain are the Hopes of long Life in those who are well advanced in Years, or who are labouring under some desperate incurable Illness? And how altogether unaccountable must the strong Desires of Life be in those, who have nothing to make it easy or tolerable. And yet we can by no Means say that such Desires and Hopes are uncommon.

Gal. vi.
14.

Infer. 5. How indifferent shou'd we be with respect to this Life and World, and all the Enjoyments of it? Being *crucify'd to the World*, and having it *crucify'd to us.* So great an Uncertainty on their Part should be attended with an equal Indifference on ours. We should sit loose by those Things that hang so loose by us. How unreasonable is it that we should suffer our Affections to be so glew'd, or our selves to be so

* *Vita summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam*
Spatio brevi
Spem longam resecet.

Her.

fast

fast ty'd down, to such Things as we can't retain any Time? For then the Removal of 'em must be like the tearing away of our Flesh and Limbs. And how little Ease can they have who lean so much upon what is so very uncertain and moveable? How little Satisfaction or Rest can they enjoy who are continually dwelling and feeding upon Vexation and Vanity? We are but Pilgrims here; and in the short Time of our Pilgrimage, what a great Variety of Scenes do we usually pass through? We should learn then in whatsoever State we are there-Phil.iv.11;
with to be content. And in order to this Attainment we should labour for a greater Degree of Indifference to all earthly Enjoyments whatever. Then may we pass through all the Changes of Life, and yet still retain an even Mind, and our inward Peace and Tranquillity. For this depends not upon the good Things of this World, but upon the Favour of God, and the Testimony of a good Conscience, which are no way affected or alter'd by any Variation in outward Things, if we our selves don't vary our Temper or Conduct, contrary to what is our Duty. We should be careful indeed not to contract too great a Friendship with this World, for this is *Enmity with God*. And who would James iv.4. lose the Friendship of God for such Trifles as these? What's all the World to an immortal Soul? and, What all the Favour and Applause Matt. xvi.26. of Men to the Approbation and Favour of God?

Infer. 6. This serves both to recommend the Thoughts and Care of a future and better World to us, and also to prove the Truth and Certainty of it. If the whole Life of Man, and all the Transactions and Enjoyments of it are

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but Vanity, and as a Dream or a Shadow; should we not then bend our Thoughts and Cares towards that World, and those Enjoyments that are both lasting and satisfactory? Common Prudence should lead us to give the future World the Preference. For what wise Man would not quit a small Matter, even for a doubtful Prospect of an infinitely greater Advantage? And how much more would we proclaim him a Fool or a Mad-man, who refus'd to do this, when that which he is to quit is a mere Trifle, and the future Prospect is both great and certain? Many indeed are too apt profanely to say, Who would quit a Certainty for an Uncertainty? But how easy is it to answer this Question by asking another, viz. Who would not quit certain Vexation and Vanity even for an uncertain Prospect of complete and lasting Felicity? But the very Vanity and Uncertainty of all that there is in this World, is it self a convincing Argument that there must be

Heb. xi. 40. a future World, in which God has provided better Things for those who have serv'd him faithfully here. If this vain Life and vain World were all we had to look for, would not there be just ground to say, *Wherfore hast thou made all*

Psal. lxxxix. 47. *Men in vain?* Whoever rightly considers the Nature of God, and the Nature of Man, and the Nature of this World, and of all that is in it, must certainly conclude, that a future, invisible World is a Reality, and that this should be the Object of our greatest Care and Concern. The Pleasures of Sin and Sense will never be put in the Scales with those of Heaven, whilst a wise Man holds the Balance in his Hand. For the one is empty and perishing, and the other *Fulness of Joy and Pleasures for evermore.*

*Psal. xvi.
xi.*

Infer.

Infer. 7. How great an Advantage must Death bring to the godly? *To them to die is great and real Gain.* For then do they leave Vanity and Vexation, Sin and Sorrow, behind them; and enter upon the Possession of the blessed *Inheritance of the Saints in light.* They exchange Vexation and Vanity for solid Happiness and Glory, Briers and Thorns for the Tree of Life, Tears of Sorrow for those of Joy and Praise. For in this Tabernacle, *they do groan and are burdened;* but when they put it off, *they are cloathed upon with their House which is from Heaven.* The Light, to which they go, is sufficient effectually, and for ever, to dissipate all Clouds of Darkness and Sorrow. Solomon says, *Wherfore Eccles. iv. I praised the Dead which were already dead, more than the Living which are yet alive;* and uses some other Expressions in that Book to the same Purpose. The Proposition which he seems manifestly to assert and maintain is, that abstracting from Religion and a future State, it is better not to be, than to be in this World; and the Reason by which he defends and supports his Assertion is, that the Miseries and Troubles which attend this Life are more than a Balance for all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of it. But then how much better must it still be for the Godly not to be in this World; for when they cease to be in this, they exist, and are happy, completely and eternally happy, in another. They only leave what it is better to want than have, that they may possess what is indeed well worth the enjoying. I doubt not, but all of you will readily refer and apply these Things to the present Occasion. You see here a Consideration that may mitigate our Sorrow; but how hard is it to keep within Bounds upon such an Occa-

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Occasion? We are more apt to consider our own Loss than the Gain of him that's departed. And it must be readily own'd that it is a great and general Loss which now is sustain'd; a Loss to all, though the greatest to his Relations and Hearers. But that which makes our Loss to be so great must make his Gain to be the greater.

I think it neither Presumption nor Flattery to say, he is not only gone to the Regions of Light;

Dan.xii.3. but having been a wise Teacher, and turn'd many to Righteousness, he there shines as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.

Let none then, even those who are the most **I Thess.iv.13.** nearly concern'd, sorrow as those who have no Hope; as those who have no Hopes of a better World, and of their own and their deceas'd Relations Interest in it. Your Meeting in the upper World will be as joyful as your Parting here

Ver. 17. has been sorrowful; and then you shall be for ever with the Lord, and them. To be unconcern'd and insensible is not your Duty, but to moderate your Passions, and to keep within Bounds, and to guard against all unreasonable, unbecoming Complaints and Repinings, is what you ought to do. Remember the Psalmist's

Psal.xxxix.9. Words and Example, *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth; and consider closely his Reason, because Thou didst it.* That Prince's Arrogance is severely and justly censur'd, who is reported to have said, "That if he had been present, he could have contriv'd and fram'd the World better than God had done." And yet in effect what better are they who quarrel with the Dispensations of his Providence? For is not the real Language of all such Repinings to this Purpose; "If we could not Make, at least we can Rule the World better than God?" Let all then

then submit and be still, and silently adore that God, who we are sure orders all Things well and wisely, tho' his Judgments be unsearchable, and his Rom. xi. Ways past finding out. 33.

Infer. 8. If Man be Vanity, and his Life a mere Shadow ; then let us not be too much surpriz'd if we find the Event answerable to this Account. If our greatest Comforts in this World be remov'd ; or chang'd, as it were, into our greatest Afflictions and Trials ; is not this what we should have reckon'd upon ? If the greatest and best of Men die from among us, we should remember that they were Mortal as well as others. Rom. viii. 10. *The Body is dead because of Sin, though the Spirit be Life because of Righteousness.* Good Men are of the same Make and Constitution with others, and have the same Seeds of Mortality in them. If Learning and Wisdom, or if the better Endowments of true Grace and unaffected undissembled Piety ; if any desirable Qualification, or even all such together, would have preserv'd a Person from Death ; you would not now have been as Sheep without a Matt. ix. Shepherd, nor should I have wanted a Friend 36. *justly dearer to me than a Brother.* But the all-wise God, who is holy in all his Works, and righteous in all his Ways, has remov'd this just Man, 17. *this righteous Person ! Oh ! that it may not be from some great Evil that is to come upon us who Isa. lvii. 1. survive.* And must we not say upon this Occasion, that a great Man indeed is this Day fallen 1 Sam. iii. in our Israel ? O my Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof. He, under God, was our principal Support ; and with him our Glory is in a large Measure departed. Surely no Man more than he imitated the Example of his great Master ; he went about doing Acts x. 38. good,

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good, making it his *Meat and his Drink*; doing it with the greatest Pleasure and Chearfulness, and without any Prospect or Desire of Gain to himself. He did much good to the Bodies of many, as a skilful, successful Physician, and much good to the Souls of many, as a faithful, upright, able Minister. Many have own'd themselves indebted, to him as the Instrument, for the Lives of their Bodies, and many for the more valuable Lives of their Souls. His Practice of Physick (for which he was thoroughly qualify'd) was in an entire Subserviency to his ministerial Work and Success. He desir'd to be, and was a useful Physician, only that he might thereby be render'd a more successful Divine.

I Cor. xi. Be ye therefore Followers of him, as he was of Christ Jesus. Those Things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in him, do: And the God of Peace shall be with you.

Phil. iv. 7. He is now dead, but, Oh! let his Example long continue living and fresh in your Memories.

Heb. xi. 4. By his Example, he being dead yet speaketh. I know so general and unbounded a Liberty is usually taken in Commendations and Characters upon such Occasions, that even in a Case where the truest Account is the most advantagious Character, the Account may still be of suspected Credit to those who knew not the Person; how easy a Credit soever it may find with those who did personally know him.

2 Cor. iii. For did he need Vouchers or Letters of Commendation to you while living, or Praises before you when he is dead? You are his Epistle, your Consciences his Vouchers (at least to your selves) I design not at present to give any particular historical Account of him. His great Sense and general Learning were known and confess'd by People

People of all Perswasions. No Man hated more than he any Thing that was loddid and mean. And it would be well for the World, and well for themselves, if many who pretend to much Gentility or Honour, and perhaps would engross the whole to themselves, had an equal Share with him in this Temper. But I would only at present recommend some Things to you that are worthy of your Imitation, and imitable by you. For other Particulars I must refer to the Account of his Life intended to be prefix'd to his *Discourse of Human Frailty*.

i. *His Integrity.* And, Oh! how eminent, how superlatively bright and shining was this! As a Light displaying much Glory and Splendor in the midst of much Darkness. The gross Treachery that so much prevails in the World, would have serv'd as a Foil to set off his Integrity, if it had not been too conspicuous of itself to need one. Surely if our Saviour's Character of Nathanael be applicable to any of this Generation, we may say it of him, *Bebold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no Guile*, John

47. Integrity is a precious Jewel, and to be valued even when fully'd and obscur'd by Dirt that adheres to it: 'Tis so splendid as even to shine through a great deal of Rubbish; and when almost cover'd over with such Spots as greatly deface it, yet 'tis still much more to be valued than glittering outward Appearances, which in fact are no more than vile deceitful imitations or Resemblances of it.

But when Integrity is adorn'd with Prudence, Humility, Meekness, and other Christian Graces and Virtues; Oh! the Beauty and Ambleness of it! Who can then resist its attract-

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ing Force? It extorts a high Regard and Veneration even from such, whose Principles and Practices are far from being agreeable to the Christian Doctrines and Precepts. Now such was the Integrity of your late excellent Pastor, a rich Jewel set in the midst of a great many others, and so shining with a redoubled Lustre. And such was the Effect it produced, even a universal Esteem and Regard.

And if vile Hypocrisy, sordid Dissimulation and Treachery, be found among any of you, who were so long under his Care, and the immediate Influence of his Example; how must Confusion and Horror cover you, when you stand together before the awful Tribunal of God, and he be constrain'd to bear his Testimony against you, and to say, *these be they who ran Counter to all my Instructions, and acted the Reverse of all my Example?*

Acts xxiv. 16. It was his daily Exercise whilst he liv'd, to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men. And when he came to *2 Cor. i. 12.* this was his "Rejoicing, the Testimony of Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Surety, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, he had had his Conversation in the World, and more abundantly towards you." Oh may we all of us thus live and thus die.

Sic mibi contingat vivere sicq; mori.

Numb. 33. 10. Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his!

2. His Moderation and Charity, join'd with profound and inviolable Regard for the sacred Scriptures, and the grand Doctrines of Christianity. His Principles were truly Catholic, and his Temp

and Venerable Disposition truly charitable. Some, if I may so express it, are uncharitably charitable. Either their Temper contradicts their Principles, or one Part of their Principles proves inconsistent with another. Their Principles are extensive, but their Tempers are narrow. Or they with Bitterness and Uncharitableness censure and condemn others, who have a higher Opinion of the Importance of some Christian Doctrines than they see fit to entertain. Others again, under Pretence of extensive Charity and Catholicism, become downright Libertines in Principle or Practice, and run into a scandalous indifference as to all Religion whatever. But in him whom we now mournfully remember, there was, in every respect, a beautiful Correspondence, and a most agreeable Harmony as to his Moderation and Charity. All the excellent Properties of Charity mentioned by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. shone forth with a great deal of Brightness in his Temper and Conduct. He was both in his Principles and Disposition extensively charitable. And yet the last time I saw him in the Land of the Living, he took Notice with much Concern and Earnestness, how difficult it was to keep our selves and others in the true Mean between Libertinism and uncharitable Bigotry, and lamented it much, that Endeavours to bring Men off from the one, should issue in their running over to the other.

In his last Sicknes he express'd the most profound Veneration for the Scriptures, admiring and adoring the divine Perfections that are so gloriously display'd in the Work of Redemption. His Concern for the Interest of Christ, and for serious faithful Ministry, by which it might be promoted, continued to the last..

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3. His Self-denial. Our Saviour has expressly said, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself*, Matth. xvi. 24. This is the Characteristic of a Christian, the distinguishing Badge of a true Disciple of the Lord Jesus. And where shall we find more Self-denial, than appear'd in your late reverend Pastor? So far was he from seeking himself, that any Advantage offered rather gave Uneasiness to him. Even his most tender affectionate Regard for his Family, (in which no Man exceeded him) could never prevail upon him to seek or accept any worldly Advantage, which he apprehended might in the least abate his Usefulness as a Minister, or any way interfere with the Interest of Christ and Religion, which he had always so much at Heart, and which with him prevail'd over, and run down every other Thing that oppos'd or stood in its Way. There is now but too much Ground for

Phil. ii. 21. the Apostle's Complaint, *All seek their own, not the Things which are Jesus Christ's.* But he was a singular Instance of the contrary. He sought not his own, but the Interest of Christ Jesus. To him

Phil. i. 21. to live was Christ. He naturally cared for your Phil. ii. 20. spiritual State, and sought not yours but you. He 2 Cor. xii. 14. did not desire to gain you to himself, or for himself, but to Christ Jesus. And if you are not

Acts xviii. 6. gain'd over to Christ Jesus by him, your Blood must be upon your own Heads. He has done his

Ezek. iii. 19. Part, and deliver'd his Soul. To win your Souls was all he propos'd in this World. If he has la-

Rom. x. 21. bour'd in vain as to you, and stretched forth his Hands all his Life-time, to a disobedient and gainsaying People; sad will be your Case: But his Reward was with the Lord, and he is now gone

Phil. i. 21. to receive it. To die was Gain for him.

I shall

I shall conclude, with two or three Particulars, by way of Advice.

1. Be firmly united one to another. When God has remov'd your Pastor, you that are the flock should run and keep close together. If you divide and scatter when you are left without Shepherd, what Danger must you be in of being lost or destroy'd? If your now desolate House should also be divided against it self, how should Mat. xii. stand, or what can you expect, but that it ^{25.} soon should be entirely ruinous? If there be therefore any Thing of a Spirit of Pride or Division rising up among you; oh! let this humbling Providence bring it down; and be aw'd by this severe Stroke into a more humble and peaceable Temper. Remember how good and pleasant Psal. cxxx. is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity; and how necessary is it in Time of Danger and Trouble to do so? Be at Peace among your selves, and may ^{1.} Thess. v. 13. the God of Peace be with you.

2. Pray earnestly to God for his Direction and help. Let the Psalmist's Prayer be yours upon this Occasion: Help, Lord, for the godly Man Psal. xii. 1. haseth, the faithful fail from among the Children of Men. When faithful Men and faithful Ministers fail, 'tis then time to make our Recourse to God. Good and faithful Men may fail, they must die as well as others; but our good and faithful God can never fail, nor ever cease to be faithful and good. Pray therefore fervently to him, and place an intire Confidence in him: When you know not what to do, let your Eyes be towards your God. And then perhaps when you are most afraid, and most at a loss, he'll disappoint your Fears, and send you unexpected Relief.

3. My last Advice to you shall be much in the Heb. xiii. Words of the Apostle, *Remember him who bears the Rule over you, and who has spoken unto you the Word of God; whose Faith follow, considering the End of his Conversation.* Remember his manifold pressing and pathetic Exhortations, his manifold warm and serious Warnings. And now when I must speak no more to you from this Place, let the Providence it self speak the more powerfully. Each of you, in a Word, endeavour and pray that you may meet him at the great Day with Joy and Comfort; and that instead of being of that Number, whom he must then bear his Testimony against; you may be found among those who shall be his Crown, and Joy in the Day of the Lord. And I shall not have done, when I have once more solemnly recommended your late Pastor's Example to your Imitation, and you to God and the Word of his Grace.

*Thess.
I. 19.*

Acts xx.



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